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BIRDS AND VIEWS

OF

SOCIETY



TAKEN BY

RICHARD DOYLE.

B I R D ' S E Y E V I E W S

OF

S O C I E T Y .

D R A W N B Y R I C H A R D D O Y L E .

E N G R A V E D B Y T H E B R O T H E R S D A L Z I E L .

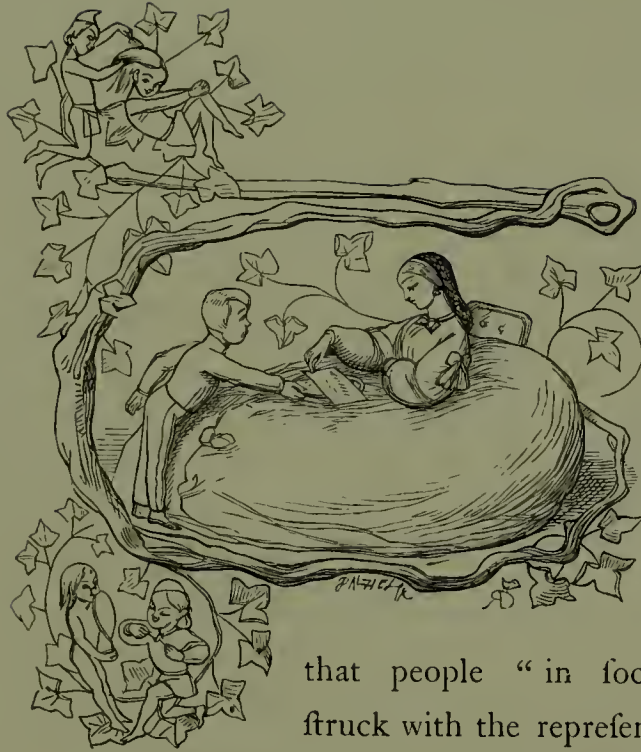
L O N D O N : S M I T H , E L D E R A N D C O . , 6 5 , C O R N H I L L .

1864.





"AT HOME. Small and Early" Refreshments.



“AT HOME.”

H E drawing which accompanies these few lines does not pretend to novelty of subject. Nor is it hoped

that people “in society” will be struck with the representation of what

they so constantly see, and, it may be added, feel in the Season. It is intended chiefly for the information of country cousins, intelligent foreigners, and other remote persons: also young ladies and gentlemen growing up, and not yet out, to let them know what they may expect when they “give up to parties what is meant for man-

kind.” Perhaps, also, in the future, it may be news to that distinguished New Zealander so often referred to by contemporary writers, and who, we are given to understand, will himself be fond of drawing. Far be it from me to imply that this attempt to picture a manner and custom of modern society is likely to live in that distant period of posterity when St. Paul’s is in ruins, and the enterprising traveller is sitting patiently on the monument—the broken arch of London Bridge—sketching. It is only intended to convey that a fossil copy of this book may chance to be dug up by the antiquarian of the Future.

It is a protest against a habit the givers of parties are given to, of inviting into their houses more people than the houses will hold. And it may be remarked, that if it be necessary to the happiness of the hosts and the success of “At Homes” that the guests should be crushed almost to

death, it would be an improvement if such pressing invitations were issued in winter only, and not, as now, chiefly in the hottest months of the year.

It is common at these receptions for the crowd to reach such dimensions that, the rooms becoming quite full, the company is squeezed gradually up the stairs till it disappears out of sight in the direction of the bedrooms, and towards the roof of the house; while in another direction it overflows through the windows on to the balconies into outer darkness. More guests arrive every minute, and endeavour to make their way into the presence of the hosts; some struggle courageously, but never reach the rooms, and subside at last on the stairs; others succumb sooner, and live the rest of the night on the landing, a quiet, but an oppressive existence amongst coloured lamps and flower-pots. The whole staircase at last becomes choked up with "society," closely packed, leaning against the banisters on one side, and the wall on the other, resigned to its fate; while in the centre or

middle passage, the horrors of which increase each moment, two streams of company are seen, one supposing it is going up, and the other under the impression that it is coming down; but this is a delusion, for neither has moved more than three-quarters of an inch the last half-hour, and it becomes a melancholy subject for speculation, whether at this rate the middle of next week or the latter portion is the soonest their respective destinations are likely to be reached.

In such circumstances a philosopher may, although a stout lady be standing upon each of his patent-leather feet, in agony, yet fixed—the edge of a Gibus hat stuck in his eye, or an elegant gold pin of enormous size decorating a lovely head, but at the same time stabbing him in the ear—he may, still, if he has any pluck, find amusement and instruction. He may find pleasure in the delightful good-humour of some, in the long-enduring, uncomplaining patience of others; and again, he may see one of the gentler sex, while grief is struggling in her face, gallantly

preserving her company smile, and trying hard to look as if she really thought it pleasure she was undergoing; and he may see, and hear too, some of the sex that is not gentle seeking relief to their pent-up feelings by muttering words of a condemnatory nature. He may discover who is good-tempered, and who is not, as he looks upon that mob of well-dressed persons, whose trains, heads of hair, wreaths and bouquets, flounces and feelings, are all more or less ruffled.

But observe the refreshment-room. From about midnight all the various currents set in in that direction, those in the drawing-rooms, the landing, the little boudoir off the drawing-room, the staircases, and the hall: all these, which are full, are to be emptied into the refreshment-room, which is already full. That is the intention; the consequences of the attempt to carry it out it is not easy to imagine or to describe.

Suppose yourself slowly drifting towards the ices, you being, perhaps, short of stature, but of a persevering nature

—pledged, perhaps, to the Object of your Affections to get a strawberry cream, she being on the point of fainting—you yourself in an exhausted state, your progress stopped in front, and the horizon shut out from view by a big fat man. The consciousness that the parting of your back hair is being ruffled, that a dragoon's moustache of supernatural length is tickling your eye on one side, and that the man of all others in the world you most dislike has his elbow wedged into your side on the other, almost drives you to despair; and when, with a surprising effort, you are able to turn to escape these, it is only to find your countenance violently imbedded in the wreath attached to a lady's hair. To be near the rose is considered an advantage, but when the roses are artificial that makes a difference. For my part, I think what I describe realizes the picture of an honest man struggling with adversity, formerly esteemed one of the noblest of fights.

After all, while there are Beautiful Beings, men will be found willing to go through dangers and difficulties to

fee them and to serve them: and who can doubt that in the fabulous period when the knight killed a dragon, or fought his way through the enchanted forest, an additional pleasure was imparted by those facts to the interview afterwards with the princess, who was waiting the result on the tower top?

Suppose, then, that you have survived the supper-room, your next endeavour is to get into the apartment devoted to outer coats, &c.; and upon reaching which, you fondly hope that your garment will be delivered up upon the production by you of a small ticket, having a number inscribed upon it. Vain delusion, and weak-minded man! The barricade of tables formed for the preservation of order and the outer garments, and behind which neatly-attired maidens had officiated, in the early part of the night, has been stormed by "society," and complete anarchy prevails. Ladies' cloaks, beautiful bournoufes, shawls, bags containing furs, strange hoods, are trampled under foot, with coats, Inverness wrappers, and hats, all mingled together, and

flung about in the wildest disorder. "Numbers" are no use; the maids are fled, or out of their wits with perplexity; it is a wild hunt of ladies and gentlemen for their "things." Some find them, some don't; some take what comes, some go without taking anything; some have even been known to imagine they had a chance of recovering their property, by calling next day.

And to think that there were some people who moved heaven and earth to get invited to this party, while of those who were there the greater part seemed to think only of how they could get away soonest, and in safety!

The change into the fresh air is pleasant after an atmosphere of faded flowers, wax-lights, and scent. There is a whole army of servants about the door, the familiar shouting of the linkman greets the ear, a long stream of carriages, their lamps shining into the far distance, meets the eye, while above are the stars glittering in the cool, bright sky.



A Juvenile Party.

A JUVENILE PARTY.—3 TILL 7.



FROM three till seven does not describe the time of life of the company; it means the hours at which the party begins and ends.

Children now-a-days are invited "out" very soon after they come into the world; and to say that youth and beauty at the age of three years are commonly seen at a juvenile party is to give a very faint idea of the fact. Babies are invited; and in the horizontal or recumbent stage of their dear little existences, before they have reached the perpendicular and toddling period; and the consequence is, that portions of the company are carried into the assembly by

processions of nursery-maids, in whose arms they repose, staring about with great intelligence, but quite unconscious of the nature of the proceedings, and dressed in the height of the fashion, or their time of life, bless them!

The little boys at first are shy and awkward, and eye one another with half-curious, half-pugnacious looks, uncertain whether to make friends or to plunge at once into violent personal encounters and desperate trials of strength. The little girls are more dignified and self-possessed, but slightly overwhelmed with the extent and oppressed with a sense of the magnificence of their attire.

Of all living things, the wisest is surely a certain kind of little girl just before reaching the recognized age of reason, and a long way off from what are called years of discretion: she is so sensible, so sedate, so useful, so everything that is proper; she can direct, instruct, or advise any number of brothers, or manage the most complicated household affairs.

and, in short, seems by instinct to belong to the governing classes. In humble life, she is seen in the street followed by a troop of youngsters, carrying in her arms the baby, who is a boy rather bigger than herself, and it is a fine sight to see how she manœuvres the whole regiment of them over a dangerous crossing. Amongst the well-to-do in the world she is generally seen with her needle or her book, very quiet, a little apart from the hum of visitors in the drawing-room or the roar of nurseries up-stairs. Common sense and prudence are her most prominent characteristics; and my belief is, that in all the affairs of life she is qualified to give the very best advice. At the juvenile party, she is seen enjoying herself in her steady way—dancing or playing, with a kind of sober merriment; an enemy to everything rough or boisterous, and always keeping an eye on her younger brothers and sisters. What would the mothers do without her?

The accompanying drawing is designed to show a children's party at that advanced period of the entertainment when the

stiffness and the coyness, and the pride and the pomp of the earlier part of the afternoon have given way, in most cases, to the high spirits and demonstrative behaviour of the natural juvenile. The sports and pastimes are raging, so to speak, and may be said to include dancing, and eating and drinking, blind-man's buff, rocking) horse exercise, and music on the penny trumpet; besides playing at soldiers and Noah's ark (with all the latest improvements), fighting, flirtation, Jack-in-the-box, and no end of other games, sentimental conversation, and sleep! And to think of the improvement in the manufacture of toys since the days when I played at Noah's ark! In what other direction has civilization progressed at such a rate as in that art which once upon a time represented the inhabitants of the ark with a uniform and artless simplicity—all the quadrupeds supported by four perfectly straight pieces of wood by way of legs, the body being a shapeless block, and every bird and beast, without exception, decorated on its outside with round spots of vermilion colour of about the size of a

fixpence. While now what a change! The most lovely lions, tigers, and giraffes; with coats of such a delightful fluffy texture; their forms modelled with a pre-Raphaelite attention to detail; outfides that might challenge the criticism of a Landseer; insides constructed, no doubt, on principles that would be approved by Professor Owen.

As I have endeavoured with my pencil to show a few of the varieties to be seen on these occasions, to attempt here anything like a list or elaborate description of the company would be as a twice-told tale, and perhaps tedious. A very few representative juveniles may, however, be pointed out as certain to be found at every party, and amongst them the young lady who considers herself no longer a juvenile, but is not yet "out," so just condescends to come, and conducts herself with great dignity, unbends so far as to dance with the little people, and is kind to "the children." There is the good-natured boy, whose great delight is dancing with all the smallest of the little ones, helping them through the intricate figures of a quadrille or country dance, or saving

them from being swamped by impetuous waltzers of larger growth. It is pleasant to see him bent double in the endeavour to reach his partner, while that little fairy with an effort stretches forth her two hands to his, and dances away by means of a series of jumps, regardless of time, or space, or collisions with other couples, or bumpings up against the spectators. And the performance must be attended with dangers, the young idea being prone to shoot out its legs every way, for well do I remember once on asking a little fellow, after a general engagement of this kind, how he liked it, his saying, "I enjoyed myself very much, but I am full of kicks." Then there is the proud young lady who does not consider that the years of the little boy who modestly asks if he may be allowed the pleasure, entitle him to that distinction, so is engaged, or not going to dance this time—a little thing a jacket, indeed! Such like incidents have happened at parties not juvenile, only then it is not the want of years that is objected to in a partner.

Then there is that good-for-nothing boy, who is slovenly in his drefs, and odd in his ways, and won't be like other boys, and does not care much for play, and does not dance and can't learn eafily, yet pores over books or any curious mechanical contrivance, in the moft abfurd way poffible, for hours. He is like a fifh out of water at a party, is confidered rather a failure by his family and friends, but perhaps may fome day be looked upon as a genius, and write, or invent, or difcover fomething that will make him famous. And there is the rude boy who makes faces, and is very funny, and plays practical jokes, and is the terror of the timid ones. And there is the mifchievous young gentleman with the large organ of deftructivenefs, who has great natural gifts, of a kind that difplay themfelves in the breaking of windows, taking toys to pieces, tearing his own and everybody elfe's clothes, and upfetting every article fufficiently handy for the purpofe that comes within his reach. For about three feconds after fome great act of deftruction he looks very penitent,

but he instantly begins again, and fortunate is the party in which only one fpecimen of this genus is found.

But if fome are troublefome and riotous, and others begin to difplay precocious fymptoms of vanity, many others are charming in their looks and little ways, and perhaps the fociety and converfation of babies the moft delightful of all. When I get over the firft feeling of fhynefs in the prefence of a ftrange infant, and when pre-fuming fo far as to venture to offer my hand find that it is not only taken but fhaken, it is more gratifying than the notice of the greateft potentates in the land. The procefs is this: you hold out a finger, the firft, and it is instantly clutched by the whole four beautiful little chubby fingers and a thumb of the other party, which clofe tightly round your one finger with an intensity of friendlinefs and confidence, and which is accompanied by a look fo happy, and fo ftraightforward and honeft, and unselfifh, that the recollection of it is a joy for ever afterwards. Emboldened by the feeling of intimacy thus eftablifhed, one

may sometimes go so far as to thrust a finger gently into the centre of its cheek (a very young baby may be called "it"); and if it is not offended by this familiarity, the whole face becomes dimpled over with the most beautiful smiles, the mouth, the eyes, the cheeks, the chin, the whole face becomes radiant with the brightest and most sunshiny laughter. At the same moment a sudden kick out of a little foot, in the direction of one's waistcoat, the baby being in the arms of a nurse of course, shows a natural jollity, and a disposition at that early age to poke people in the ribs. Then the mouth struggles into the position usually employed in whistling, but the result is more in the nature of

crowing. It is not possible to express the sound by any combination of letters at my command, so it is best not to attempt it. The conversation does not go much beyond this, and there may be some who would object to it on the ground of deficiency of point; others may prefer more variety; but to me it appears very expressive as far as it goes; and if it is not very witty, or very learned, or particularly wise, on the other hand, there is no effort at display; it is not ill-natured, or pretentious, or vulgar, or silly; and it is to be preferred to much of the talk that is sometimes heard in "society."



A MORNING PARTY. Shewing the Nobility and Gentry playing the Fashionable Game of the Period.

A MORNING PARTY.



HEY sometimes call it a "breakfast;" and if we consider that people have not only taken that meal about six hours before, but since then in all human probability have eaten a good lunch, the appropriateness of the name must be obvious to all. The reason why it is called a "morning party" must be that it takes place rather late in the afternoon.

These entertainments generally are to be met with a few miles outside of London. After a drive upon a dusty road, under a hot sun, the sensation is agreeable of stepping on to a bright greenward, over which are moving in a graceful and languid manner ladies and gentlemen, dressed in all the

colours of the rainbow and of the fashion. Huge, luxuriant chestnut-trees spread out their shadows, which flicker with the glaring sunlight in a dazzling manner over clouds of muslin, the wearers of which stare at one another or talk to one another to the music of the Royal Horse Guards, Red or Blue.

Such is the general character of the morning party; but of late a delightful form of amusement has taken possession of the world, and no party is complete without the presence of "Aunt Sally." Who that worthy person originally was, and what she did that sticks should be perpetually flung at her head, are questions at present shrouded in mystery. Judging by her complexion, which is as black as it can be painted, it seems she comes from the land of Serenaders. A great event it was when first she was introduced into polite society; for besides giving employment to the Upper Ten Thousand, when in pursuit of pleasure, it has a beneficial effect on the manners, as

tending to mitigate stiffness and unnecessary dignity of deportment, a very haughty air being scarcely compatible for any length of time with the act of flinging at "Aunt Sally's" head. A gentleman of great pretensions has been known to commence playing with a serious and condescending air, by degrees to warm into it, get excited by repeated failures, then by a lucky stroke to succeed in smashing the old lady's pipe into atoms, and what with the elation consequent on that event, to forget to be important for some time.

The inventor of this entertainment supplied a great want of mankind, the love of destruction, the appetite for which is gratified by the repeated application of the sticks to the "Aunt's" countenance, and the occasional annihilation of the pipe which protrudes from her face, in the place where her nose ought to be. Hence the popularity of the game.

Opinions may continue to be divided on the relative merits of "Aunt Sally," and the older, and, in some respects, similar "Knock-'em-downs," long an important feature at every racecourse and fair (three throws a penny).

My own view, after considering the matter fully, and making repeated practical experiments is, that the latter pursuit, at the moment when, aiming at a pincushion, which is surrounded by a needle-case in the form of a very yellow apple, on the top of which is perched a small wooden doll in an angular and defiant attitude, the whole being nicely poised on the point of a slender stick, lets fly a well-directed shot, and sends pincushion needle-case and doll flying in different directions, my decided opinion is that the feeling of pride and gratification and triumph, is more intense than any to be derived from a like process in regard to "Aunt Sally."

Those who prefer to dance a quadrille may enjoy that gentle form of exercise under the shade of the trees; and any one who wishes it may eat ice or drink tea under the shade of a marquee.

When the fun has sunk behind the trees, and the sultry day is changing to evening, and it is tempting to linger in the fresh air, it is time to depart. Every one drives back to town.



A County Ball.

A COUNTY BALL.



AMONGST the pleasures in pursuit of which it is the custom to undergo an extraordinary amount of hardship and suffering, the County Ball is entitled to pre-eminence, inasmuch as it generally takes place at a time of year when frost and snow prevail; and in order to reach it people have often to travel in carriage-load twelve or twenty miles, that they may dance in a crowd denser, if possible, than that of a London rout, and not go home till morning when daylight has probably appeared.

It generally takes place at the Town Hall, or at the best inn's best room, which is decorated with garlands and

banners, on which are represented the arms of the noble and influential families of the neighbourhood; and there are portraits of aldermen and other distinguished citizens of the town, illustrious for their civic virtues or for having made their fortunes. And if you have not provided yourself with a ticket beforehand, you have the privilege of being able to pay at the door.

The music, when not supplied by the kind permission of the colonel of the nearest regiment, is formed of the town band, and is remarkable chiefly for the fact that, as the evening proceeds, their intonation becomes more uncertain, but their performance generally more spirited and wilder in execution. The company is composed partly of visitors and partly of natives; the visitors being mostly swells from London and other distant places, and having the conventional manners and customs of such; but the natives may be distinguished by something more of distinct

individual character, and there is just a tinge of the rural in their aspect.

The native comes out strong in waistcoats—his array in that respect being gorgeous. In ordinary “society” the waistcoat may be said to be, as it were, merged in the man—a uniform sombreness pervading the entire evening dress. But the country gentleman cherishes his waistcoat—has his favourite waistcoat, and brings it out on great occasions; it is evident that he has expended much thought on the selection, and that as he expands his chest so as to display as much as possible of that portion of his person, he is proportionately proud of the result.

The County Ball is a great opportunity for the exhibition of uniforms, militia, deputy lieutenant, and other fancy dresses; and it is probable that there are few men with any position at all, who don't find an excuse for becoming something or other that entitles them to wear a little gold embroidery on their coat, or a silver stripe down their

trousers. As for Scotchmen, it is believed that none are to be found, however mild in appearance or manners, who, if their wardrobes were searched, would not be found to possess, only waiting an opportunity to be worn, a complete Highland suit, kilt and etceteras—if, indeed, the word complete can ever be properly applied to that description of costume.

When the usual quantity of quadrilles, waltzes, lancers, country dances, cotillons, reels, and “pop-go-the-weasels,” have been danced or struggled through, in the nature of things comes supper, and then you will observe that a comic man, generally recognized as such, and evidently a great favourite in that part of the country, is called upon to make a speech—returning thanks for the toast of “The Ladies,” probably; and he rises to do so with the air of one who feels that he is the right man, and the confidence following from a conviction that he is in the right place. He proceeds to deliver a speech, which the county paper afterwards describes as “replete with wit

and humour," and as received by the delighted company with "one continued roar of laughter."

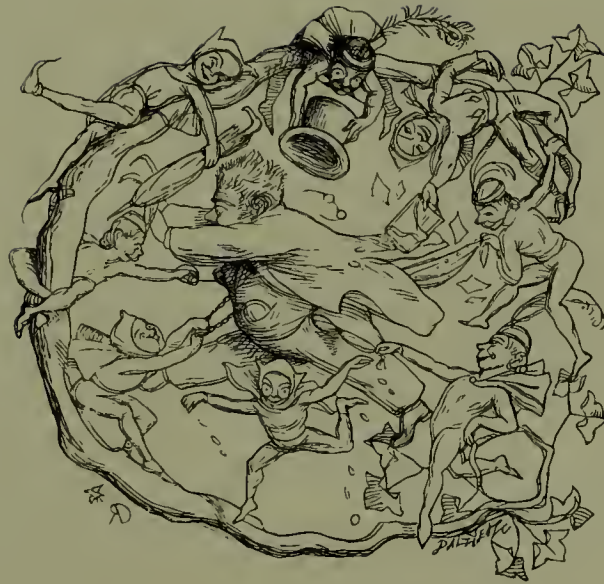
I began by saying something about hardship and suffering, but those words are now withdrawn. What does it matter, if people are good-humoured, and bent upon being

amused and amusing others, whether they are driven to the scene of the festivity one or twenty miles, or if the state of the weather be many degrees below freezing point? If the party be a merry one, the longer the journey the better. May County Balls continue and flourish!



Bazaar and Fancy Fair.

A CHARITY BAZAAR.



H A R I T Y
Bazaars and
Fancy (Vanity)
Fairs are on the
increase. And
why not? If
rosebuds can be
fold at a pound
a-piece, if a
large business
can be done in
cigars at half-a-crown, if a cup of tea can fetch half a
sovereign, and an active trade can be done in single straw-
berries at any figure you please, and the proceeds go to
support the sick, or to educate the poor, it surely does
not much matter whether a little frivolity and display
take part in what results in so much good. It is only as

if—to take an illustration from a stall at one of these
entertainments—the beautiful bouquet which is handed
across the counter for your acceptance, in return for a large
sum of money, and with such a fascinating and irresistible
manner, contained, tied up with the roses and lilies, say,
a single “forget-me-not,” or a little bunch of “pride.”

Besides, although it may be true that all the stall-keepers
are not moved by the highest motives, think of the number
of kind, charitable fingers that have worked at all those
gorgeous tobacco-pouches, and brilliant muffetees, elabo-
rately ornamental flippers, and magnificent pieces of
worsted-work, many of the owners of which fingers do
not appear, and take no part in the “vanity,” satisfied
with having lent a hand to a good work. And so do you
go and purchase recklessly, and don’t let the circumstance
of your not wanting anything stand for a moment in the
way of your buying any quantity. And, you rigid but

mistaken moralist, who disapprove because amusement is blended with benevolence,—you had better say nothing, unless you are prepared to pay out of your own pocket the whole sum likely to be realized. In that case, the promoters will probably be delighted to have attained their object by a process much simpler and in every way less troublesome.

And if you do come, make up your mind beforehand how much you intend to spend, and spend it like a man, and with a cheerful countenance, and without any absurd anxiety as to getting your money's worth; and don't dole out the coins with that agonized and heart-rending expression of countenance as if you were parting with your life's blood, so common with persons of unlimited wealth.

The bazaar is held in a large marquee, which is surrounded by stalls gaily decked out with ribbons, wreaths, and flags, and covered with merchandise; and numberless young ladies preside at the stalls, dressed in the height and breadth of the fashion, and never cease to attract public

attention to the goods with the most winning, coaxing, insinuating, and, if one may be allowed the expression, wheedling ways. If they remained behind the counters, in a tradesman-like manner, a man might have a chance; but not content with engaging him in front, they throw out scouts; and light troops (of young ladies), in skirmishing order, are spread over the field; and should he survive the heavy artillery of the stalls, a dexterous flank movement forces him to surrender at discretion. He must buy that enormous pincushion, and that piece of worsted-work, and that chair, and the baby's cap, and the box of chocolate, and put his name and money down in the raffle for an "old master."

You may see a swell, for the fun of the thing, by Jove! mildly doing duty behind a stall, recommending "novelties," or good, sound, serviceable articles that will wear or wash, with such perfect gravity, that you might fancy he was brought up to it.

And you may, if you look. perhaps see a young and

lovely stall-keeper, forgetful of her duties in that position in life which she has chosen for the day, and which enjoins upon her an unceasing persecution of every creature supposed to possess money, absorbed in conversation with a party of prepossessing exterior, and so deeply interested therein that business is entirely suspended. And there is reason to suppose, from appearances, that the subject of conversation is not the "shop."

As the day closes, the prizes in the raffles are drawn,

and, amid much excitement, are lost and won. The exertions of the sellers give way to physical exhaustion, and the pockets of the buyers have become exhausted also. Fabulous bargains may now be had: articles, which were offered in the morning for ten times their value, are "given away." The worn-out stall-keepers have scarcely energy enough left to ask any price at all. An auction is improvised, and the whole of the remaining stock, is at a most alarming sacrifice, going—going—gone!



"A State Party."

A STATE DINNER PARTY.



HE solemn, lengthy, and ceremonious banquet is here represented. It may be likened to the legitimate drama, which must be in five acts, or it is not legitimate. It is as good as a Play in one sense at least, and is in five acts at least, and the plot is as follows. In Act 1, the leading incident consists in the appearance, and rapid disappearance, of two characters—of Soup. And so far there is more action than dialogue, decidedly. Act 2, enter fish, and after brief interval exit, as stage direction says, feverally. In Act 3 the interest increases—a greater variety of incidents, some taken from the French,

making their *entrée* upon the scene almost at the same time, or following one another in rapid succession. In the 4th Act you may almost always guess what is going to happen, even if the bill does not tell you, the leading facts being invariably of the same kind, but popular nevertheless. Towards the end of the 5th Act, it has been noticed in this class of entertainment, the interest usually falls off; but it would be a mistake to suppose, therefore, that people are not satisfied; quite the contrary.

To lay aside this dramatic comparison, is it not the fact that dinners are sometimes a little too long and often unnecessarily plentiful? It is impossible to eat of everything, and the attention of the bewildered guest may be distracted between the contending attractions of the too numerous bill of fare. He cannot possibly partake of all.

Perhaps if there were only half as many dishes there might be twice as many dinners given.

To set before the guests the delicacies out of season, the youthful strawberry, or the premature pea, before those pleasing productions of nature are within the reach of ordinary people, is a privilege which must have charms for any well-regulated hostess's mind.

When the dinner is pompous and grand the company is often pompous and grand too, and seems to have been invited, not for friendship's sake, or for its agreeable qualities, but because of rank, or fortune, or "position."

Under these circumstances gentlemen wear their neckties stiffer and tighter than usual, supporting their chins up in the air more fixedly thereby, and causing in the countenance generally a constrained and painful expression of importance, and their waistcoats having an expansive and inflated appearance not to be seen in ordinary times.

Breakfast has been called the pleasantest meal, because no one is conceited before one o'clock, and certainly some people do seem to change their manners, if not their natures, when they put on evening dresses.

The servants stroll about the room with a kind of easy languor, sometimes when inclined, handing a plate, or, when the idea occurs removing one, without reference to whether you are done or not, or in the intervals of attending to the conversation, they may think of attending to you, and perhaps fill out a glass of wine.

And what a depressing thing it is when you endeavour to converse with your next neighbour, and find, after starting the most various subjects, making the most abrupt transitions from one to another, in the vain hope of hitting, upon her or his favourite topic, that it is impossible to elicit anything but "yes," except "no."

There is nothing for it at last but to throw your whole mind into your dinner, and to seek that con-

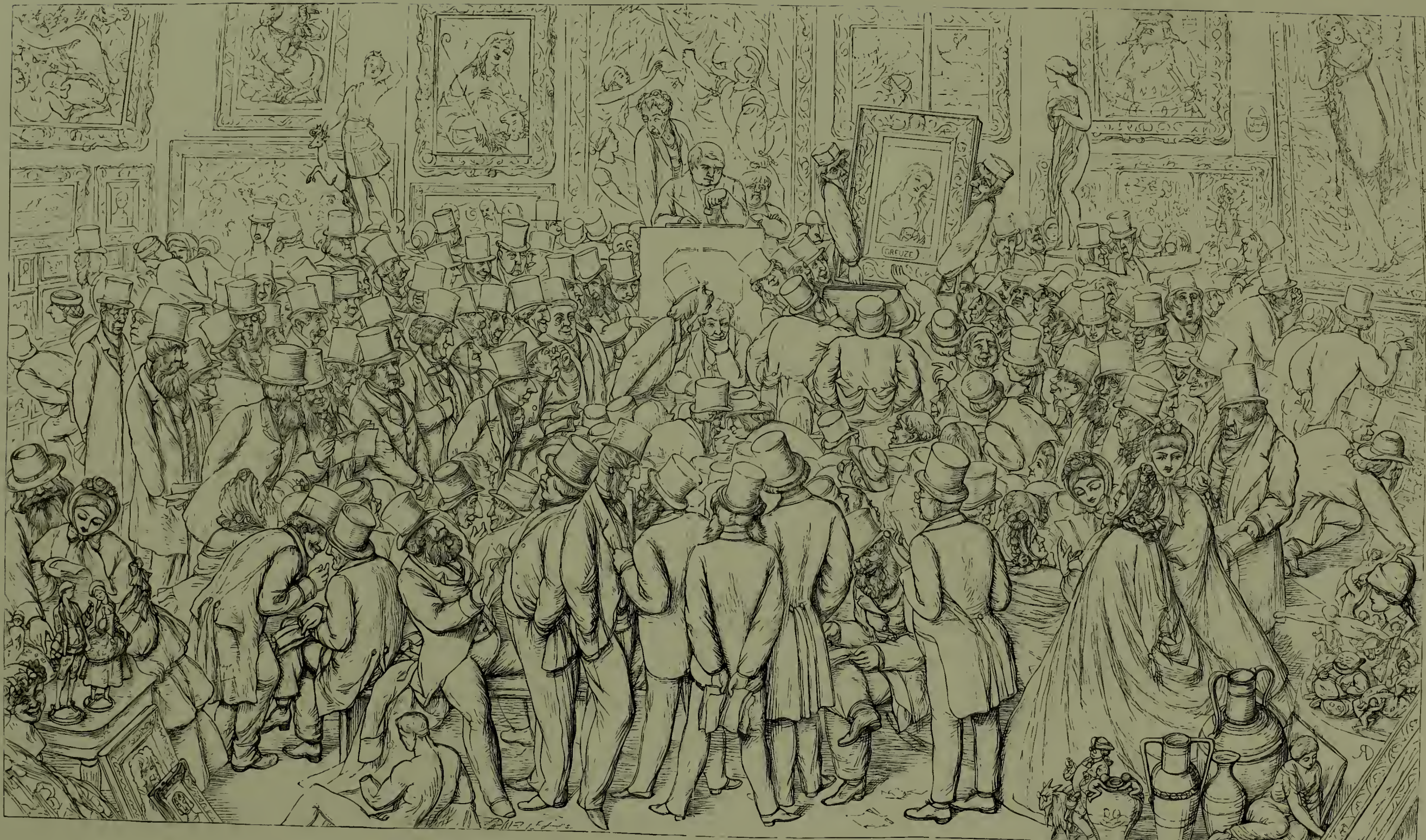
folation therein which is denied in your neighbour's conversation.

The accompanying picture is to be understood as representing only one type, and that rather an old-fashioned one, of the heavy dinner-party.

It is not intended to imply that because such entertainments are sumptuous and profuse they are confe-

quently always dull. The exceptions are brilliant and numerous.

What can be more delightful to the eye and to the ear than a dinner-table, with its bright lights and beautiful flowers and pretty china, and furrounded by a party of friends sparkling with pleasant talk?



The Picture Sale.

THE PICTURE SALE.



PICTURES are very well in their way, but it is the purchasers that are most valuable to look at. And they form a collection that includes specimens of a great variety of schools—some antique, some mediæval, many quite unique. Curious old noblemen, very rare, with an early English tone and flavour of the country about them; old-fashioned fossils of men, looking as if they had been dug up; and who must be dug down again, for they never appear anywhere else—may be seen peering into the pic-

tures, poking their noses into China, prying into snuff-boxes, or burying their faces into dingy portfolios. Musty-looking, dusty-looking dealers are there, prowling about, seeking whom they may bid for, and there are quantities of florid-looking speculators in Art and Virtù of the pre-Christian or Mosaic-Arab school, highly coloured, highly varnished (about the hair and boots), and bejewelled about the fingers and waistcoat. And it is just possible that you may see a Puseyite art-student on the look out for examples of the painfully perpendicular school.

These, with many more specimens of the connoisseur, collector, patron of the Fine Arts, and “man of taste,” are certain to be on view in the auction-room when that well-known and famous Gallery of Works of Art, the property of a “gentleman going abroad,” is about to be brought to the hammer.

The Art Auction is included in this series because it is

one of the forms of amusement that society delights in; a stroll in there of a morning to see what is going on, being with the unemployed classes of the West End, one of the most fashionable modes of passing an hour or two after breakfast.

Some buy pictures because they like them; some buy them because others buy them; some because they wish to "have a taste;" some because they think it a good thing to invest in that description of property, and who are only dealers and speculators in, under pretence of being patrons of, Art. There are those, too, who have a passion for Sèvres; Majolica or Raffaele ware has an absorbing effect upon the minds of many; and men have been known to devote the energies of a long life to the accumulation of Dresden.

They don't look very happy as a general rule these bidders and buyers, or as if they derived much enjoyment from their occupation, and you may wonder how it is that rich men can spend so much time and take so much

trouble in the pursuit; but perhaps you are not aware how exquisite is the pleasure some people find in buying an article they don't want for less than its proper value.

At the appointed hour the urbane auctioneer ascends his rostrum amid a buzz of expectation and flutter of catalogues, and proceeds to put up and to knock down the various lots, dilating upon the merits and describing the characteristics of each with a persuasive eloquence that would draw forth one bid more from a bidder of adamant.

The wonder is, where the pictures all come from—these endless "old masters?" The fine deep-toned, sombre, grimy landscapes, almost invisible from the dirt of ages, or quite invisible from cleaning, not wisely but too well done; the ignoble, stumpy little drinking, and fighting, and dancing Dutch boors; the acres of canvas covered with those eternal hideous sprawling gods and goddesses; the elegant, artificial, uninteresting shepherdesses in hoops and patches and powder, and the shepherds in wigs and high-heeled shoes, posing about amid highly cultivated

landscape gardening, and in every conceivable kind of graceful and idiotic attitude; the great dashing, coarse, muscular, over-drawn, gorgeous, brutal Flemish pictures; the simpering, curly, sleepy-eyed beauties of the Lely and Kneller periods; the dexterity, and the bad taste, and the cleverness, the quantity of artistic skill and the absence of

Nature:—"Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,"—in fact, am gone. And if any of these epithets should appear harsh, the reason is that the writer is by the sad sea waves contemplating a vast extent of ocean, with a beautiful sky overhead; and in the presence of these feels, perhaps, little inclined to appreciate inferior works.



At the Sea-side.

AT THE SEA-SIDE.



PEOPLE at the sea-side are for the most part intent upon doing nothing, and the object naturally is to do this in as great a variety of ways as possible. A dazzling hot sun glittering upon the waves, and always in one's eyes, and the measured roar of the sea rolling in or rolling out, and perpetually in one's ears, combine to reduce the fatigued cockney, as he reclines upon the sands, and gazes lazily upon the ocean, to a state of the most helpless inactivity. The monotony wearies yet fascinates him; and it is difficult to do other-

wife than stare in a vacant manner at the moaning, foaming, sad sea waves. To fling pebbles, at deliberate intervals, into the sea, is an occupation perhaps the best suited to the situation, the effort to throw while one is in a fitting posture taxing to the utmost the physical energy, while the strain upon the attention required in aiming at a particular crest of an advancing wave is as much as the mind can conveniently bear under the circumstances.

Reading is supposed to be a favourite pastime at the sea-side, but this is a mistake; for although there is always a circulating library, and large quantities of novels, magazines, and books of travel are carried down to the beach each day by the ladies, they don't read them. They may open a volume, perhaps, and then they go to sleep for certain. The only pursuit of men and women, besides bathers, is looking at one another, and at the sea. Every time you go out you meet every one else, and you very soon learn

the whole population off by heart, which last you lose sometimes, if you are liable to that kind of loss, inasmuch as young ladies go about with their hair—which requires drying, you know, after having been in the sea—streaming about on their shoulders, and in the wind, in the most picturesque and bewitching way.

Perfect repose cannot be looked for even at the most quiet of sea-sides. If you escape the bore, who is probably on the look-out through his telescope, and about to bear down upon you—and happy is the watering-place which contains only one of that species—there is still that ancient and pertinacious mariner who persists in proposing a sail; there is the juvenile vendor of shrimps approaching by sure steps; the brass band of Germans is pressing for payment; and, as sure as Fate, the original bones of the Ethiopian Serenaders will be round with the hat in a moment, praying to be “remembered.” When the languid visitor has got rid of these; when he is tired of seeing the bathers bobbing up and down in the sea in

an absurd manner; when he is satisfied with the contemplation of the various young couples engaged in sentimental conversation, which, at the sea-side, is always accompanied by a most serious and earnest-looking process of drawing hieroglyphic characters of some sort on the sand with the point of a parasol or walking-cane; when he has considered the question of the game of croquet as played upon the beach in all its bearings; when the subject of donkeys and their riders and drivers is exhausted; when the marine painter who has pitched his easel on the sands, and who is struggling with the difficulties of his art and of seeing through the bodies of the maritime population who surround him, has ceased to excite his curiosity; when he has lost all interest in the perilous adventures of parties landing from their boats; when to his heart's content he has watched the equestrians force their reluctant steeds into the waves; and when the immense but temporary excitement caused by the arrival in the distance of a steamboat has passed away,—let him

look on the children playing on the sands, and see if he cannot find pleasure in contemplating their pleasure. For the little people are in their glory here. The sands have been surely made for them. How fresh and handsome they look, the splendid, brave-looking little fellows, in their sailor-hats and jackets, the sun shining upon their bright, round, red cheeks, and the pretty little chubby

girls with their long hair flying about in the breeze. What intense happiness to dabble up to their ankles in the sea! What delight to dig canals with the little spades, and to build up great castles of sand! What fun to bury one another, and how jolly to dig one another up again, and what a gratification to spoil one another's clothes!



A Popular Entertainment.

A POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT.



CONCERT HALLS and such like places of public entertainment have lately become so like taverns, or taverns have become so like concert halls and such like places of public

entertainment, that it is not easy to say where one begins and the other leaves off. A great want must surely have been met when promoters and managers of the People's amusements first conceived the happy thought of combining singing and tumbling, and eating and drinking, and smoking—of blending, as it were, brandy-and-water with sentimental

songs, and Bounding Brothers, and low prices. It must be very much better than a play,—if we may form an opinion from the numbers who crowd to these places,—to be able to sit, with a little table before one, with, for instance, a bottle of beer upon it, to have one eye turned upon an acrobat, the other gazing affectionately at the drink, a cigar hanging lazily from the mouth, from which curls of smoke come forth leisurely and languidly, for one's ears to imbibe the while the brilliant but violent vocalization of modern Italy, or the refined comic song of our own land, happy with either, and considering each song, dance, or other performance with an impartial look of languid contentment, a hazy, sleepy, stolid, stupid, sense of smoke, and drink, and general enjoyment.

There are many gentlemen present who have very much the air of being at home, and as if they did that kind of thing every night,—and perhaps they do; many others

who have the appearance of having come from the country, and who seem under the impression that they are seeing life,—and no doubt they are seeing it as far as the smoke permits; and there are others who, from various outward symptoms, look as if they had what is called a foreign origin,—and very likely they have.

They are all, no doubt, very fond of music; and if they are not, it is very pleasant to think that the entertainments are so various, that there is a chance of everybody's taste being satisfied—that if people are not pleased with one thing they may be with another; and that if the ear is not charmed with music, astonishment may be excited, and ladies and gentlemen may be roused to enthusiasm by

seeing the wondrous feats that may be accomplished on the tight-rope, and the extraordinary contortions of which the human acrobat is capable on the earth or in the air.

When Song, and Comic Dance, and smoke, and eating, and drinking, or Dramatic Scenes, or Nigger Serenaders, or Infant Prodigies, lose their charm, the public may still be drawn in thousands, and will overflow nightly to witness any performance in which the personal danger to the performer is sufficiently great, that the feelings of spectators are likely to be “aroused up,” and a reasonable prospect exists, that, in case of any flip or accident, serious danger to limb, if not instant death, is likely to be the result.



Dinner down the River.

WHITEBAIT DOWN THE RIVER.



HE weather is hot, or change of scene is defirable, or you want fresh air, or like whitebait, or there is a pleatant party going. Any of these, or all, may be sufficiently good reasons why a man should go down from London, especially on a hot, fultry summer afternoon, to Greenwich or Blackwall, and dine. It is an institution is dining down the river, and beloved by Londoners for the most part. The drawbacks being that the dinner is very unwholesome, and that when the tide is out the effect upon the nose, arising from the mud, is not of nature such as a person

has a right to expect when out upon an expedition in which fresh air is one of the ingredients looked for. This is a roundabout way of saying that there is a bad smell.

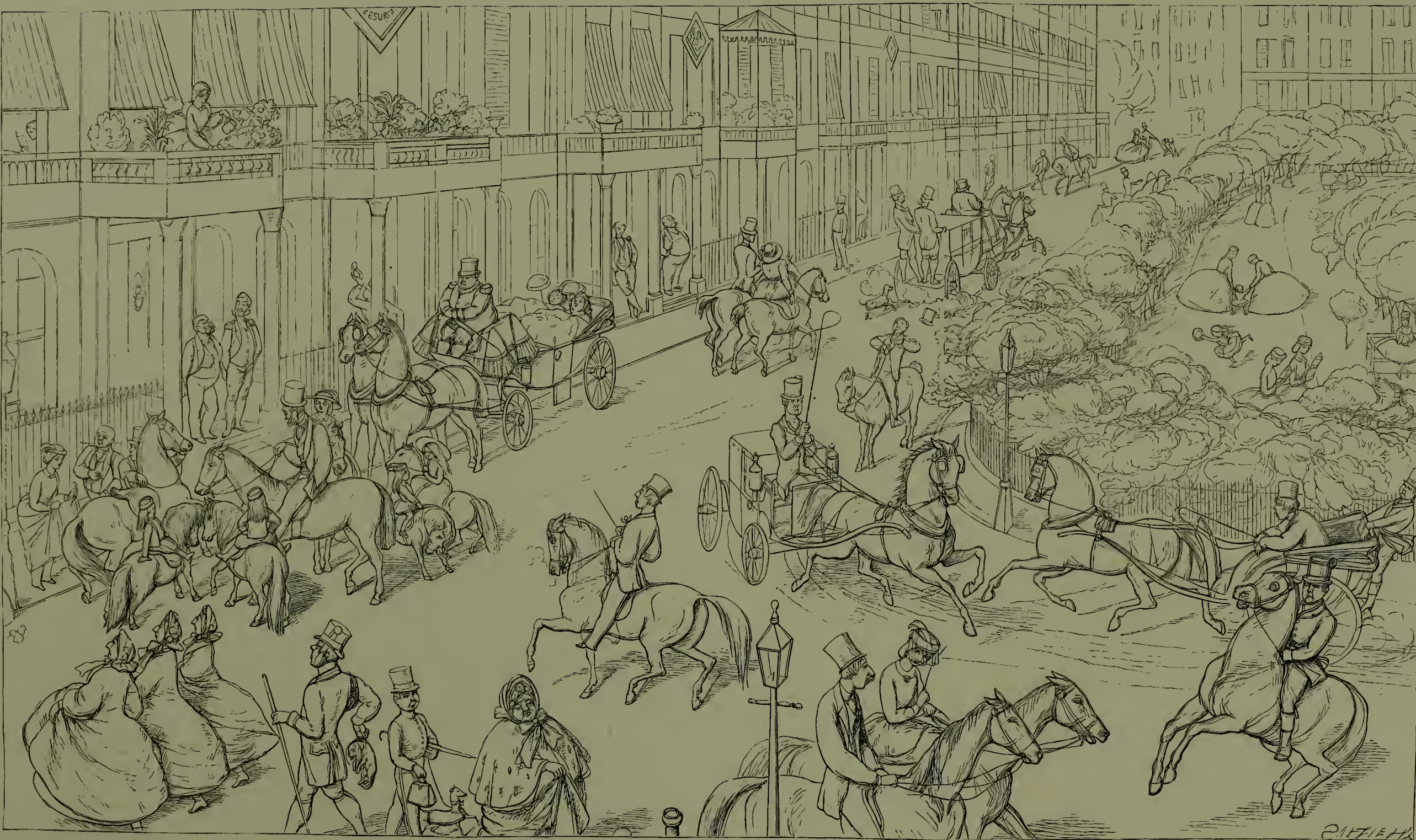
The chief difficulty is getting to the railway, as you generally go down just at that time of day when the City is coming home westward, and the chief thoroughfares are impassable, being blocked up with a compact mass of carriages, omnibuses, carts, and cabs—the whole of which “keep moving” about six inches every ten minutes.

When once in the train, you are whirled along, as it seems, over the tops of the houses, and not Don Cleophas himself, in the *Devil on Two Sticks*, when Asmodeus takes him on a tour of inspection, that wonderful airing over the city of Seville, more completely overlooks the habitations and the inhabitants than does the railway traveller in those regions as he is carried along over that strange country, amid an apparently never-ending panorama of

dingy red roofs, squalid-looking garrets, hideous church steeples, grimy chimneys, the masts of ships, storehouses and docks, and clothes hanging out to dry.

Arrived at the hotel at the river-side, you step out upon the balcony, and see the stately ships sail by, the great steam-ships grandly moving along, the little penny steam-boats running here and there, and in and out, "easing her" or "stopping her," or setting down or picking up excursionists, and panting and puffing away again at a great rate; and there are enormous barges, laden with coal or straw, slowly drifting with the tide, there is the Isle of Dogs, and Greenwich Hospital and the old pensioners, and the mud-larks, and the poor Jacks, and many other things to look at while you wait for dinner.

And when you have dined, and eaten of every fish in the sea and in the river, and have had your whitebait devilled, and want no more brown bread and butter, and have had as much champagne as is good for you, you may again look out of window. While you were absorbed in fish, and conversation, and wine, the sun has gone down, its last rays throwing a golden light upon the sails of the vessels that glide round the bend in the river and move gently past. Darkness comes gradually on; a light here and there is lit, perhaps a green or red one in some ship, and throws its bright reflection into the water. The stars come out, and the moon shines brightly on the Thames. And in case you don't care for whitebait, this, at least, was worth coming to see.



Belgravia out of Doors.

BELGRAVIA OUT OF DOORS.



ROSSING over Piccadilly at Hyde Park Corner, on a summer's afternoon, the traveller in London finds himself suddenly, as it were, becalmed after a storm. So great is the change from the roar and

rattle the crowd and confusion the stream of omnibuses and cabs and men and women that fill the length of Piccadilly and Knightsbridge, to the quiet, stately, wealthy, aristocratic, and somewhat dull-looking district known as Belgravia.

In this picture an attempt is made to represent a view of Belgravia about that time of the afternoon when the nearest approach to movement and liveliness takes place. Even then a certain unruffled calm seems to prevail everywhere. The sun shines oppressively, the pavement is hot,

the blinds are down, the houses within have a cool, shady, deserted look. Everybody, that is the family, is out. Six-foot powdered domestics habited in the livery of the period, varied occasionally by a portly butler, fun themselves, mostly in couples, on almost every doorstep, and in attitudes more or less expressive of elegance and ease; and there is an additional air of dignity and independence, and of being in undisputed possession, as it were, of the premises, and all they survey, for the time being, from the circumstance that the inhabitants of the mansions are, for the most part, out driving in their carriages, or riding on horseback in the Park.

Ever and anon a terrific volley of apparently never-ending double knocks (where that somewhat barbarous appliance has not yet given way to the milder and more musical bell), suggestive of the idea that the person performing on the knocker has suddenly gone out of his

mind, breaks upon the otherwise stillness of the scene, and indicates to the passer-by that in all human probability one lady of fashion has left her card upon another lady of fashion.

Observe the recumbent position of the ladies in the open carriage which has just driven up to the house on the left-hand side of the square. The correct thing seems to be to lie back quite flat on the back amid the multitudinous robe which rises up and spreads far and wide and overflows in every direction, and above which the chin of the fair one just emerges as it were above water, a parasol likewise rising perpendicularly like a little sail above the waves, or like a slim mushroom from the midst of a snowy mountain of I am sure I don't know what material.

You may see, if you please, the youth with the fatigued

air who drives his cab so lazily that he seems to have hardly sufficient energy left to turn a corner. He would perhaps like to lie down, and let the driving be done by the tiger who swings and clings on behind.

There are parties of ladies and gentlemen on horseback quietly wending their way towards Rotten Row. There is sure to be an old dowager or two about taking a walk on the funny side of the way. And it is almost impossible to avoid seeing at least one over-fed, ill-tempered-looking little pet dog, attended by a servant, and taking a constitutional walk.

And in the garden of the square young ladies, not yet out, are to be found, with their governesses and nursemaids, reading and walking and playing croquet and not having found their lives as yet a bore.



After Dinner.

AFTER DINNER.—A FEW FRIENDS IN THE EVENING.



ERHAPS this may once have been a cheerful, pleasant party. At dinner some hours ago, when the evening was still young and the company bright, we may, if we like, imagine everybody to have been delightful, with no end of amusing stories about everybody else. That was before everybody had said everything they had to say. Judging from the appearance of things as seen in this drawing, the gentlemen, who have exhausted their topics, seem to have recently joined the ladies, who have also exhausted their topics of conversation. So that they are all exhausted together.

At this critical period, when the dinner-party may be said to be dying out slowly, come a few fresh arrivals, who have been asked to look in in the evening. The

theory probably is that they may throw sparks into the expiring embers and light up a new blaze of lively conversation; and a very sensible theory, no doubt, it is; but in practice, in this instance, it does not work well, for it is obvious that the gentlemen lately arrived do not amalgamate at all with what remains of the dinner-party. The latter are becoming a little drowsy just as the former arrive; one is ready for talk may be, the other for sleep. With the best intentions in the world, conversation cannot be carried on long or pleasantly, if one of the two parties to it confines himself or herself to monosyllables and yawns; and people, be they otherwise ever so amiable, charming, and accomplished, may cease to interest, if they have only a half conscious and wholly abstracted expression of rapidly closing eye to give in return for your, we will suppose, pointed remarks.

Looking round the room, we are struck with the forlorn appearance of the two gentlemen with whiskers near the

fire-place. They don't look at ease. They resemble fishes out of their natural element. Perhaps they don't know any one. Perhaps they don't know what to say. There is a young gentleman sitting on the edge of the sofa who looks on the point of summoning up the requisite courage to make a remark to the lady who sits passive and patient, waiting the event.

One of the company seems to have taken a sudden interest in a picture upon the wall ; another, wandering in the far room upon the outskirts of the assembled group in a hopeless state, turns over the leaves of a book which probably would be found upside down ; a third in despair, for want of something to do, looks at himself in the glass. Let us pity them.



Rotten Row in the Season.

ROTTEN ROW.



HIGH is it for, air or exercise, or is it to see or to be seen, that the world congregates on one side of

Hyde Park of an afternoon in the season? Probably it is partly for one and partly for the other. A great equestrian performance, a kind of Astley's, takes place, and the spectators sit in reserved seats (one penny each, twopence with arms), and survey the scene.

As a sight, it is very cheap at the money, more especially when you compare it with other entertainments in other theatres, for which you pay quite other prices for uncomfortable stalls in hot, unpleasant atmospheres, look-

ing at, often, less amusing performances. Here, at least, there is fresh air, and room enough for your legs, which you may for another penny even place on another chair.

Chiefs out of war, and statesmen in and out of place, Members of Parliament and of the Stock Exchange, clergymen and barristers, City swells, country gentlemen, merchant princes, heavy and light dragoons, railway contractors, peers, peeresses, foreign ministers, and bishops on horseback, all jostling one another up and down, cantering, or prancing, or creeping along, or standing still, or sometimes being run away with.

The ladies and gentlemen who form the spectators sit along the pathway under the trees, partly sheltered from the rays of the sun, and criticize good-naturedly, no doubt, the costume or movement or features of each individual in the procession of pedestrians, which streams lazily past, in slow time, before the elegant occupants of the seats, who are holding the review.

A little further back, gentlemen are perched in rows upon the iron railings, looking like listless birds all very much of a feather, who have flocked together on a telegraph wire.

Amongst the company may always be seen that well-dressed young gentleman of the period, who has expended so much thought upon his get-up that he quite despairs of ever being properly appreciated, his chief object in life being, it is supposed, to extort a larger amount of attention and admiration from the World than it is in the World's power to give; and so he is unhappy. He thinks it the right thing to do, you know, to take a stroll just to show himself, you know, and see what there is to be seen; and so he moves laboriously and painfully along, his eyebrows raised unreasonably high while he looks anxiously to the right and to the left and straight before, and every other way, in an impossible endeavour to see everywhere at once

and receive the recognitions of his acquaintances, and he is in a constant terror lest he should overlook or miss some person of consequence.

Apart from the genteel company and spread over the grass at play, are numerous little children, attended by nurse-maids, who are attended often by Royal Horse Guards red or blue; or sometimes by a park-keeper, who, in a previous stage of existence, has been in the wars and is covered with medals and walks as if he were conscious of the fact.

Rotten Row is sometimes haunted by an aged dandy of bygone days, a relic of the fashion that is gone. A melancholy object rather, like a dismal ghost returned and wandering amid the scenes where once he was a glads of fashion, and perhaps a mould of form as well. All the faces and the fashions have changed since he was young and George the Fourth was king.



“At Home;”—Music. And what makes it the more gratifying is that the Chorus is composed exclusively of Amateurs.

A CONCERT.



THE power of sound in music is much increased, and its effect upon the ear made more agreeable, when it is unaccompanied by a chorus of conversation, a song without words being in more senses than one to be admired and desired. Therefore, it may be fairly put to, and considered by, ladies and gentlemen, whether, when music is to be the entertainment, and they don't care for music and don't like being silent and don't like going away, it would not be better not to go at all? This suggestion may appear hard, but it is made in justice to the performers as well

as in fairness to those who like music and who do listen, and so, if carried out would be for the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

There are many persons who, if asked the question, "Are you fond of music?" answer without hesitation, "Very," but who by that don't mean more than that they are not averse, while engaged in conversation on politics or the money-market, to a running accompaniment of soft instrumental music, which tickles their ears pleasantly without interfering unduly with their words, and forms, as it were, a picturesque background to the talk. Persons of shy or timid natures have been known to converse freely and courageously under cover of music and to suddenly collapse into silence upon the song ceasing; and it is certain that the hum of men at a concert becomes a roar, or subsides into a murmur according as the music rises into fortissimo, or sinks into pianissimo.

A great deal of silent suffering is undergone by any unfortunate man who, not having much music in his soul finds himself forced by circumstances and the crowd, over neither of which has he any control, into a position of prominence, from which there is no retreating, nor yet remaining with any comfort. Escape is out of the question cut off as he is behind by the dense mass of company which is closing in and becoming more closely packed each moment. The eyes of the performers are upon him if he betrays restlessness or want of attention, and he is a marked man in the eyes of the lady of the house if he stirs, or does not display the right amount of enthusiasm and in the proper places. Under such circumstances, don't let him, above all things, give way to drowsiness, for if he should sleep, and a solo performed through the nose and not in the programme, should unexpectedly fall upon the general ear, interrupting perhaps a passage in the music of great tenderness and beauty, it is too painful to think of the consequences. I remember to have once seen a

stout old gentleman wake up suddenly, at a concert, in the middle of a sonata of Beethoven's, and under the idea that it was all over, commence applauding vigorously with both his hands and feet, while the rest of the company looked on with surprise and curiosity. The expression of his face indicated anything rather than pleasure as the truth dawned upon him. It is a mistake to ask people indiscriminately to music, but the difficulty is that few like to confess to indifference on the subject, perhaps from fear of being set down amongst those who are fit for treasons, stratagems, and other bad practices, which is the fate, according to a well-known poet, of those who are wanting in music. There might be some one specially retained to conduct the audience if they will not conduct themselves, who might wave a bâton capable of being applied to other kinds of beating besides time, and who would inspire a wholesome terror in those who prefer the sound of their own voices to that silence which at a concert is more than ever golden.



Science and Art Converfazione.

CONVERSAZIONE: SCIENCE AND ART.



HE rooms are fitted up with all kinds of novel, curious, interesting, and instructive objects, Models of steam-engines, and steam-boats, printing-presses, and iron-clad ships, railway signals, life-boats, new lighthouses for saving vessels, and rifled guns just invented for destroying them, balloons for the air and diving-bells for the bottom of the sea. There are huge maps hung upon the walls, showing the whereabouts of the most recently-discovered tract of the world, and perhaps there is a surviving officer of the exploring expedition which made the discovery present to tell all about it. Another traveller may be seen explaining, to an intensely eager and interested

group of listeners, with the assistance of the skeleton and a full-length portrait of the beast as he is supposed to look when he is at home in his native wilds, the manners, customs, and personal peculiarities of the latest thing in apes.

The last portraits out of pre-Adamite monsters may be seen, imagined and put together by a distinguished naturalist; and perhaps even a real fossil fragment of a portion of a joint of a toe of an extinct animal.

There are busts distributed about the rooms of celebrated Philosophers and Statesmen and Poets, portraits on the walls of the most distinguished Civil Engineers, Chemists, Geologists, Comparative Anatomists, Arctic Explorers, and Eastern Travellers.

There are curiosities brought from the most recently dug up city of antiquity, and there is an immense nugget of gold from the last of the "diggings." Also there are

microscopes through which you may gaze at the marvelous beauty of an insect's wing, or the wonders to be seen in the foot of a frog, and telescopes through which you may gaze at the stars.

And an artist may occasionally be seen showing to a crowd of admiring amateurs, collected around his portfolio, the results of a just completed sketching tour.

An electric battery is to be found in one corner of the room, at which ladies and gentlemen if they like may be shocked as much as they please."

In the vast crowd that is pouring in and pouring out there will be seen great variety of men and women eminent in their various pursuits, and sometimes strange in their attire; famous lecturers upon science, distin-

guished mechanical inventors, and discoverers of planets. Some with a half mild, half wild, flightly eccentric look, others eager and thoughtful, a good many with spectacles and long hair. They have also generally a cheerful genial placid look as they chat to one another, exchanging ideas, or criticising some new invention, or drinking tea. The female savant may often be recognized by a decided tendency she has to part her hair on one side.

In conclusion, it may be said truly that the visitor who at such a meeting keeps his eyes and his ears open is not unlikely to learn a great many "things not generally known," more useful knowledge perhaps than is to be required at, say, all the balls in the season, or out of the season.



The Smoking Room at the Club.

THE SMOKING-ROOM AT THE CLUB.



ERY delightful must be the sensation of the man who has just lit a "weed," and sunk deep into the recesses of an arm-chair, very soothing, very dreamy, very lazy, very languid, very everything that is free and easy.

This view of the matter is not the result of personal experience of smoke, but conjecture derived from contemplating mankind's expression of face and attitude when under this soothing influence; after dinner, for instance, when a man lights his first cigar, and takes his first puff, there are symptoms in his countenance indicating the enjoyment of a superior form of happiness to the ordinary run of happiness; while his attitude at once assumes an ease, an abandonment, as far as his legs are concerned, a

picturesque prostration, that plainly shows that the limbs are experiencing complete rest for the first time. Almost every attitude that the human frame is capable of getting into is tried, and there seems a fresh charm in each. To get the legs and feet placed as high above the head as possible seems one great object and source of pleasure. The more difficult the positions, the more keen the enjoyment; and if it were possible to sit upon one's head—which may be within the power of man for aught I know, but which I have never seen done yet—it would probably be a favourite position with smokers.

The Smoking-Room of a Club is the place of all others where the characteristics of the man under the influence of his cigar may be best seen and studied. Sometimes he is by way of reading a novel, the last new novel, as he reclines at full length on an ottoman, or lies buried in a huge arm-chair. But only a small portion

of his thoughts are given to the book; it is quite impossible that he can follow the story attentively or form a correct estimate of its literary merits—more than half his mind is in his cigar. Sometimes he sits puffing, the picture of contentment, but not bright-looking perhaps even slightly obfuscated in appearance, the intellect as well as the countenance obscured as it were in clouds of smoke, the eyes almost closed in sleep, the utterances unfrequent, and when they come not too clear. The happiness derived

from the smoke must be so great that neither thought, nor talk of any kind, can equal it, or add to it.

When those curls of cloud go wafting slowly upwards, perhaps they sometimes obscure for the moment a misfortune, or shut out for the time the worries of life; or it may be that the smoker, his head thrown back and his eye turned up towards the sky or the ceiling, beholds a whole panorama of splendid castles in the air. But they begin in smoke and end in smoke.

